

**FAIRE autrement MAINTENANT**

**EDUCATION**

Education is the key to our social cohesion, inclusion and the development of a democratic economy. Cuts to education hinder this social project. The function of education is not only to prepare people for the job market, but above all to enable them to reach their full potential, both individually and as members of society. This applies as much to the doctoral student doing advanced research as it does to the person studying basic literacy or to the struggling elementary-school student.

It is not acceptable that the most gifted or affluent students in reality go to subsidized private schools. School must be a place of integration and not one of separation between different types of students, those of different backgrounds or social classes. Currently, the state finances private schools at 75%, and the private school is primarily for wealthy families (72% of the clientele comes from families earning over \$100,000 a year). The *Conseil supérieur de l'éducation* considered Quebec schooling the most unequal in Canada. We cannot continue to trample on the principle of equal opportunity. We have the right to a public school system in which all students develop their potential, whether they are high performers or have special needs. The Quebec public school must be a school for everyone and must be accessible to everyone in an equitable manner.

At least 20% of public school students are enrolled in selective, tailored programs created without any ministerial planning. The public school network, by trying to compete with the private sector in attracting students, has heightened the division between a talented elite and other students. By following a logic of competition, we have gone against the conclusions of studies that have regularly demonstrated the positive effects of mixing students of different academic abilities and social classes. Having high-performing students in a regular classroom is a key factor in achieving academic success for all. Selective streaming within the public system must be stopped.

In June of 2017, the Quebec government announced a supposedly ambitious academic plan to achieve a graduation rate of 85% for secondary school students by 2030. We believe the goal should be 100%. We should have the highest ambitions for our children and provide the resources for them to reach their full potential.

In Quebec, many young people do not feel comfortable in the school environment and many, mostly boys, choose to drop out and prematurely enter the job market. To increase the graduation rate, we must encourage them to stay in the school system longer, while allowing them to start working.

Children with disabilities, those with social or learning problems, often don't have access to the services they need and lack the conditions conducive to completing their schooling. Our services to students have also suffered extensively from the austerity measures imposed by the Quebec government. We must restore these services to the level at which students needs are met.

Our teachers work in very poor conditions and environments. The attrition rate among young teachers is high. Their motivation is diminished by the lack of moral support, limited professional autonomy, overly heavy workload, and inadequate compensation (being the lowest paid in Canada).

Education is one of the pillars of our society, as important culturally as it is socially and economically. It takes place not only in school, but in community groups and workplaces as well. When we look at the functional literacy rate, the statistics are alarming. We must invest more in the life-long education of all our workers. Quebec must be a society of continual learning.

### **Our education system faces great challenges, which the NDPQ will overcome:**

- ✓ A free, high-quality public school system for all
- ✓ A zero dropout rate
- ✓ A school environment adapted to all
- ✓ Teacher who are fairly treated
- ✓ A society embracing continual learning

## **OUR COMMITMENTS**

### ***A free, high-quality public school system for all***

- Limit public funding of young citizens' education to public schools
- End all direct or indirect public funding of private schools. They will keep the right to offer their services but without receiving public money:
  - with a gradual reduction in public subsidies to private schools and investment of the savings into the public network
  - where appropriate, to convert private schools that cease operations to public schools
- eliminate indirect funding of private schools through tax credits (for child care and through charitable donations to private educational institutions)
- introduce free tuition, from the first to the last year of study, at all levels of education
- end the selective streaming of students within public schools, both at the elementary and secondary levels; schools that would like to maintain tailored or alternative programs will have to do so without selecting specific students

### ***A zero dropout rate***

- aim for a high school or vocational studies diploma graduation rate of 100% by 2025
- increase the education budget accordingly in order to achieve this goal

- study the feasibility of extending the age of mandatory schooling beyond 16 years
- promote the early detection of indicators and factors leading to primary school failure
- develop tutoring and mentoring under adult supervision in high schools
- particularly for boys:
  - have them learn through concrete projects
  - such as the hands-on activities with new information technologies
- modernize the work-study model and expand the employment-oriented training option to all young people who wish to follow it, from early in high school; this will encourage all students to obtain their secondary school diploma; this course of study can be gradually extended to all students to ensure that they have acquired the skills to enter the job market when they wish
- diversify extra-curricular course offerings and encourage the development of critical thinking

### ***A school environment adapted to all***

- organize the school according to the interests of students
- reduce the number of students per class
- review the HDAA student policy and improve support and coaching (as well as support services for college students) to better respond to evolving students' needs:
  - ensure a balanced (mixed ability) class composition and deploy the resources needed for sufficient services for all students
  - respect the principle of inclusive education and the conditions necessary for its success
    - ensure professional development of teachers and the diversification of teaching, including the use of co-operative methods, through ongoing teacher training
    - add the necessary human resources to allow for the additional presence in class of a remedial teacher, a psycho-educator or a second teacher; and access to a social worker
    - foster collaboration between school team-members and parents
    - set up a support or assistance program for school counselors: hold meetings and exchanges on the difficulties they encounter and on ways of solving problems
- provide the resources needed to develop, within a single class, mechanisms to help students in difficulty and to enrich learning for high performers
- keep school boards and take the necessary regulatory measures to make parents' role in school governance truly effective and ensure that they are able to participate in the decision-making process

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**Fairly treated teachers**

- provide teachers with remuneration commensurate with their work, recognizing all the hours they work
- establish a salary scale (salary relativity) that treats teachers on a par with other categories of employees at the same qualifications
- valorize the teaching profession by respecting teachers' professional autonomy in evaluation and teaching methods and by reducing the emphasis placed on statistical results
- review the framework of professional development:
  - create a decentralized provincial service (for example by administrative region) responsible for:
    - applying the orientations related to professional development, as negotiated by the Ministry and civil society
    - managing training budgets for teachers and school administrators;
    - coordinating the various means of providing professional development to enrich the practice of teachers and keep it up-to-date
    - evaluating teachers' progress in the context of constant improvement and personalized support
- valorize the teaching profession by involving teachers in the process of modifying educational programs
- design a job security plan for teaching staff in collaboration with unions and school boards

**A society of continual learning**

- adopt a more aggressive literacy policy by considerably increasing the financial resources allocated for this purpose in the school network, in community groups working among the population, as well as in the context of workplace training
- reduce the floor at which companies are required to provide training and development for their workforce to \$1 million in payroll costs (from the current \$2 million), and gradually bring the level of investment required to 2% of payroll (from the current 1%)